

REMARKS

In response to the above Office Action, claims 7 and 9 have been amended to more specifically claim the invention and distinguish it from the cited prior art. The claims have now been amended to recite that “the outer shell member and the columnar neck member are separate members.” Support for this can be found, for example, in Fig. 5. In view of this amendment and since the columnar neck member has a shaft insertion hole which is “closed at a hollow portion side of the columnar neck member,” the “inner surface” of the closed shaft insertion hole is also separate from the inner surface of the hollow portion of the outer shell member. This is also shown in Fig. 5.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 7 and 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being obvious over MacKay in view of Satoh and a newly cited reference to Okada (JP 2002-17909). The withdrawal of the rejection of the claims over MacKay in view of Satoh is appreciated. However, it is believed the amended claims are not obvious over the new ground of rejection for the following reasons.

First of all, none of the references alone or together show the claimed structure. In all of MacKay, Satoh and Okada, the hosel for joining a shaft to the golf club head is integrally formed with the head body. Also, in Kumamoto, cited but not relied on by the Examiner in the Office Action, the hosel is integral with the head body.

In contrast, in claims 7 and 9 as amended, the columnar neck member or hosel and the outer shell member or head body are “separate members.” Thus, the inner surface of the closed shaft insertion hole that forms a continuous surface with the inner surface of the hollow portion surrounded by the outer shell member is separate from the inner surface of the hollow portion.

This combination has the advantage of allowing parts of the outer shell member of the head body to be made out of a different material than other parts as well as the columnar neck member or hosel, while still providing a continuous inner surface with no projecting portion formed thereon to the hollow portion of the outer shell member. As a result, risk of defects in an expandable bladder is minimized when it is inserted into the hollow portion of the golf club head for inner pressure molding in a suitable molding die as shown in Fig. 4. This is discussed on page 14, lines 2-16 as well as on page 15, lines 12-17 of the specification.

This would not be possible with any of the structures of the cited references. There, while the inner surface of the hollow portion of the golf club head may be continuous with no projecting portions formed thereon, the hosel and the head body are integral with each other and, therefore, are of the same material.

Thus, it is submitted that the combination of references relied on by the Examiner in the Office Action do not support a conclusion of obviousness. Their withdrawal as a ground of rejection of claims 7 and 9, as well as claims 10 and 11 dependent therefrom, under §103(a) and allowance of the claims is requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

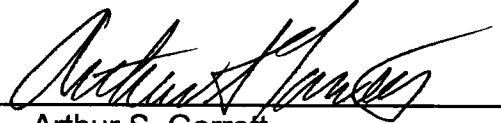
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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